

Next Meeting
February 13, 2014, 7:00 P.M.
Elk Grove Library, 1001 Wellington Ave.

Club Contact
Bob Roels 847-818-5296
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Illinois Spoonplugger

February 2014

Dues!

Jim Taylor is accepting dues. Reminder dues are \$20. Registration for the winter seminar is \$35. All checks should be made out to James Taylor, and if you cannot make the meeting send your payment to James Taylor, 1367 Loch Lomond Dr, Crystal Lake, IL 60014

December Club Meeting

Scott Duff, Craig Hubbard, Bob Pehlke, Phil Szafranski, Jim Duplex, Jerry Hein, Brett Christensen, and Bob Roels were in attendance. Planning for the Winter Seminar was the main topic, fishing reports, followed by a review of members' goals.

Winter Seminar Planning

Cabelas insists on a \$10 box lunch to use the room. The club will provide coffee, donuts and water. Due to the increased cost were concerned the club might run into the red, so admission was raised to \$35 and \$20 for those 16 and under. Below is the tentative plan.

7:30 - 8:00 Three members can begin set-up prior to opening.
8:00 Doors open at 8:00 AM. Illinois Spoonpluggers (IS) volunteers will set up. Attendees can shop
8:30 - 9:30 Registration and networking
9:30 - 10:15 Opening remarks: Structure Fishing Intro and Video, Follow-up questions
10:15 -11:15 Chase Klinestaker: Club requesting more video of Buck and discussion by Chase
11:15-12:00 Group mapping and interpretation exercise
12:00-1:00 Lunch and networking
1:00 - 2:30 Bales and questions
2:30 -4:00 Club members: Spoonplugging lessons learned

Who is doing what

Donuts and coffee - Craig Hubbard

Water - Scott Duff

Cabelas room arrangements - Bob Pehlke

Door prize (Fishing towel) - Jim Duplex and Bob Roels

Cabela's Prizes and Discounts - Craig Hubbard

Gifts/Bales e.g. blade, Poor Boys Baits, lure - Brett Christensen, Bob Roels

Cookies - Jenny Hubbard?

Projector, Speaker, Coordination - Brett Christensen

Intro and moderator - Jerry Hein

Registration - Jim Taylor, Bob Pehlke, Bob Roels

Folders - Craig Hubbard, Jim Duplex

Fishing Report

Jim Duplex reported he and Gino checked out the Fox River in Montgomery for musky. Persons were fishing from shore and catching some fish. This was several weeks ago before the big freeze. There were many Bald Eagles at Montgomery. Craig and Jerry offered other suggestions where to see eagles.

2014 Individual Goals

Phil - Continue working the distant areas down south where he has been fishing, and possibly go to Devils Lake, and Canada. These distant new waters offer opportunities to continue development of mapping and interpretation.

Jim - Plans week long fishing trips such as Lake Saint Claire.

Jerry - Check out Lake Carroll!

Brett - Sharpen his trolling skills which he feels may have suffered with his emphasis on casting.

Bob Roels - Exercise more self control and follow the basic presentation of lures. Lake Wisconsin remains a prime target.

Scott - Refine his interpretation of fishing situations to better use his electric motor and casting.

Craig - Fish more than 5 times this year!

Bob Pehlke - Overcome his fear of water. He has a new boat and custom spoonplugging rods from Mike Beck, MN to help!

Brief discussion on Trolling Motors as Tools

It is a good tool if used properly. Markers needed as a reference when using spot-lock to electronically anchor. It is easy to adjust boat position to new anchoring position. Direction heading lock is helpful if you are not used to foot control (motor automatically adjusts to maintain heading). Anchor still best.



Fishing Towel Update for March Seminar Gift

We found a vender who would print 50 towels for \$5.00 a piece including set-up. The images considered were a line drawing of Buck or the bass used on our shirts. The bass image turned out to be a poor choice on towel. The vender sharpened the image of Buck. "Knowledge is the Key to Fishing Success" will be above the image and "Illinois Spoonpluggers" below. The towels will be Navy Blue, 11 by 18 inch towels with grommet and hook.

2014 Club Calendar

February 1-March 22: 11-11:30 AM - "Structure Fishing" by Jim Shell on Comcast Sportsnet Comcast 37 (SD) and channel 200 (HD), Direct TV channel 665, Dishnet channel 429

February 13 - Club meeting, Elk Grove Library

March 13 - Club meeting, Elk Grove Library

March 29: 9AM - 4PM - Illinois Spoonpluggers' Winter Seminar, Cabelas, Hoffman Estates, IL

April 10 - Club meeting, Elk Grove Library

May 2-11 - Lake Erie SMB! Bass Islands, Contact Brett Christensen

May 8 - Club meeting, Elk Grove Library

1st or 3rd May Weekend - Return to Lake Saint Clair, Contact: Jim Duplex

June 12 - Club meeting, Elk Grove Library

June 17-22 - Leoni Spoonpluggers' Outing, Jackson, MI Contact: John Zaborny - jszaborny@yahoo.com 517-414-3596

July 10 - Club meeting, Elk Grove Library

July 9-13 - Lunker Hunters' Outing, Fisherman's Landing Contact: Chase Klinesteker - Ckspoonpl1@aol.com 616-949-8665

August 13-16 - Northern Indiana Spoonpluggers' "Buck Sez" Outing, Tippecanoe, Webster, Wawasee Lakes, Forest Ridge Campground (260-327-3551)

Contacts: John Bales - johnspoon@embarqmail.com 260-854-3921, or Ted Walter: ahbwalter@gmail.com 260-668-0216,

August 14 - Club meeting, Elk Grove Library

September 11 - Club meeting, Elk Grove Library

October 9 - Club meeting, Elk Grove Library

October 11 - Buck Perry Memorial Outing, Taylorsville, NC, Contacts: Terry O'Malley 828-855-0746 and Jeri Perry 828-632-8058 buckperry90@gmail.com

November 13 - Club meeting Elk Grove Library

December 11 - Christmas Party, Giordanos, Westchester

Spoonplugger Resources

Equipment/materials	Supplier	Contact
Quarterly newsletter, videos, spoonplugging guides	National Spoonpluggers of America	http://nsoa.info/
Book, home study guide, spoonplugs, No-boline, and rod	Buck's Baits Inc, www.buckperry.com PO Box 66, Hickory, NC 28603	Scott Jenkins, 828-428-4650 scottjenkins@bellsouth.net
Blades, and JB's	Johnny B's, John Bales	http://johnnyb-lures.com/
Plug Knocker	Jerry Borst	jborst@joltmail.com
Custom Spoonplug rods	Mike Beck	Mwbeck54@gmail.com , 612-716-2265
Videos	Spoonplugger films	Stephen Gillian
	Structure Fishing	Jim Shell, http://structurefishing.com/ jshell@structurefishing.com

Spoonplugging Instructors

John Bales - johnspoon@embarqmail.com

Jerry Borst - jborst@joltmail.com

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John Zaborny - jzspoonplug@hotmail.com

Barry Zorzanello - bzorzanello@petraconstruction.com

Don Dickson, Right Angle, Volume 1, No 1 – The Newsletter was intended to be monthly. I don't think the publication made it past edition 2.

For years I have been fishing from one end of this country to the other. This has given me the opportunity to expand my fishing knowledge and familiarize myself with as many different fishing situations as possible. These experiences have not only been a real key from a learning standpoint, but they have also given me the opportunity to talk to thousands of fishermen and get first-hand reports on their successes, failures, frustrations and ideas.

There have been many hours spent at various docks or marinas discussing the various aspects of successful fishing. The topics and directions of these discussions have been numerous; however, there seems to be a couple of things that stand out as being particularly applicable to most fishermen.

First, the average fisherman is simply not satisfied with the numbers or the size of fish he's catching. Secondly, most of these same fishermen have their own particular "method" of fishing. Each individual's approach is either the "accepted method" of his geographical area or one that is universally known as the "best method" for catching a particular specie of fish. At first glance these two things don't seem to have any connection. But, the truth is that by locking ourselves into just one particular method of fishing, we will rarely be satisfied with our overall success.

I believe it matters little whether your chosen method is one of sitting in the front seat of a bass boat casting shallow-running lures into the shoreline features, still-fishing or drifting a deep water hump with live bait, back trolling with a Lindy-rig, casting a plastic worm or crank bait over a breakline, or dangling a big shiner minnow in the weeds with a cane pole. All of these "methods" (along with hundreds of others) will catch fish at times. You and I both know that a fish can be caught by almost anyone, almost anytime, on almost any lure, fishing in almost any manner. In fact, for years the belief has been that if an angler could master just one of these methods he could in fact become successful. And to a certain extent this is true.

But, in order to become consistently successful under all weather and water conditions, under all seasonal conditions and fishing for all specie of fish, you must understand that utilizing one method alone will simply not work. I often hear fishermen say, "I have neither the time nor the desire to master all of the different methods, nor do I believe in the new secret method that seems to be revealed every year. So what's the answer?" A very good question! Luckily for us all, there is an answer and it is simply this - *In order to become a successful fisherman, one must have a total understanding of actual fishing facts.*

Now, this is not an original statement. Buck Perry, "The Father of Structure Fishing" has been preaching for many years that "Knowledge is the Key to Fishing Success". In my opinion, this is the most profound and meaningful statement ever made to the fishermen. The sad part is that it has been accepted by only a few. By recalling and discussing a few of my fishing experiences over the past few seasons, I hope we can draw some positive conclusions about the advantage knowledge has over the accepted method of a particular area or a particular lake.

A few years back, in late February, I had the opportunity to fish Santee-Cooper Reservoir in South Carolina. Santee is a huge, artificial reservoir, (Flatland 2) made up of two lakes separated by a canal approximately six miles long. My schedule only permitted me to spend two days on the lake, and during this short stay I couldn't help but observe that all of the local fishermen seemed to be using the exact same method of fishing. They were casting very large spinner baits to the shoreline features such as bushes, stumps, stick-ups, etc., and this seemed to be the accepted method for catching largemouth bass at Santee-Cooper. Now I'm sure these fishermen had experienced some success in the past by utilizing this method, and knew that at times it would produce some good stringers of fish, but I wondered if they were aware that at other times it would produce little or nothing.

It seems that whenever I have just a short period of time to spend on a particular lake, old man weather doesn't seem to cooperate. I found no exception at Santee-Cooper with extremely poor fishing conditions, (post-frontal, high winds) and it didn't take me long to discover that the accepted method was simply not producing any fish. As a matter of fact, the first day I checked over 30 boats and counted a total of five bass! Now I don't pretend to have all the answers, but by simply using some very basic fishing knowledge, I was able to catch more than 75 bass during my two-day stay.

By interpreting the prevailing weather condition (cold front) and the seasonal position of the fish (pre-spawn), I realized that the fish would be rather deep and their movements and migrations, if any, would be very short and scattered. Never having been to Santee-Cooper, I also realized that my overall knowledge of the lake (depths, structure, bottom conditions, watercolor, etc.) was practically zero, and that I only had a short time to fish.

Taking these facts into consideration, I decided that the quickest way of learning the lake and putting some fish in the boat would be by trolling. I began by trolling the shallows (waters less than 8-10 feet) to check for any signs of fish activity. I didn't expect much action in the shallows because of the prevailing weather and water conditions, but who can say where the fish must be?

After thoroughly checking the shallows for about an hour I'd only caught one small fish. So, as is my normal procedure, I started checking deeper and found a good breakline at a depth of 17 feet that ran for quite a distance. I began trolling this breakline with a deep-diving, bottom bumping lure (a 700 series Spoonplug) so I could maintain my depth and speed control. I didn't go very far before I caught my first good fish. The action was not fast and furious, but every so often I would hit one or two good fish. They were scattered along a breakline and only once did I take two fish from the same spot, but at the end of the day I had caught and released some 30 bass. These fish weighed between 3 and 6 pounds and were all caught while trolling.



While talking with some of the local fishermen, I found they were disappointed with their results. When I mentioned how successful I had been while trolling, they flat-out didn't believe me. They were so locked into their method of fishing that they thought anyone who trolled for bass had to be crazy. Their skepticism was so obvious that I decided to keep some fish the following day just to prove my point. From a fishing standpoint, the second day was a carbon copy of the first. I decided to quit a little early so I would have a chance to talk to the fishermen. I arrived back at the camp at around 4:00 with a one-man limit of ten fish weighing 44 pounds! I didn't keep the fish to prove that I was some hot-shot fisherman. I just wanted to prove to the locals as well as to any fisherman who would listen that the "accepted method" for one lake may not always be successful for all of the many different fishing situations that exist.

This is also a good example of something. Just because a bass or any fish lives in the north, south, east or west does not mean that he changes his habits, his reaction to stimuli, how he's affected by weather and water conditions, or how he moves about from a seasonal standpoint. You should understand that my next trip to Santee-Cooper may be during the spawning season with excellent weather and water conditions. In which case, there's a good chance that trolling the deeper breaklines would not be nearly as productive as casting the visible stick-ups. We must always keep in mind that it's not a particular method that allows us to catch fish, but rather a thorough understanding of fishing facts being applied to the conditions that prevail at that particular time.

Later that summer I was fishing Berlin Reservoir, located just west of Youngstown, Ohio. Berlin is a lowland type reservoir, (old farming country) with great (dingy) water color. As in most lowlanders, it has many different types of structures such as bars, underwater roadbeds, underwater railroad grades, humps, rip-rap areas along the causeways and the dam, breaklines to the main river channel and side feeder-stream cuts. Because of the multitude of possibilities in a reservoir of this type, it's imperative that we have the ability to locate, map and interpret the various types of structures. This is by far the most important phase of successful fishing. As we become better at our mapping of structure, regardless of the method being used or how sloppy we may be our presentation of lures, we will always catch some fish.

Locating productive structure can sometimes present a problem. At Berlin however, this was not the reason for poor catches by the locals. I noticed that regardless of the method being used, most of the fishermen seemed to be aware of the areas where the fish could be caught (known as local hot spots). Whether it was through a knowledgeable interpretation, or a process of elimination over many years of fishing the same lake, the fact is, most of the local fishermen at Berlin Reservoir were fishing potentially productive areas (structure, breaks and breaklines).

You and I both know that the first requirement in filling a stringer is to fish where the fish are. But there is something else that is often overlooked, and that is proper presentation of lures. We can be sitting right over top of a school of fish but if we fail to present our lures or bait at the proper depth and at the proper speed, the end result could be an empty stringer.

As I mentioned earlier, most of the fisher men at Berlin Reservoir were fishing potentially productive areas, but didn't appear to be too concerned about proper presentation or the depth and speed of their lures. I have come to the

conclusion is one of the most serious drawbacks in using just one particular method. Whatever method we might choose will undoubtedly limit us in our presentation of lures. Proper presentation means that we must present our baits and lures on structure, breaks and breaklines at all depths and all speeds until the right combination is found for that particular day or fishing situation. Using just one "method" will not allow us to have the kind of versatility we need.

During my trip I observed a few different methods that were being used such as casting the shoreline with shallow-running crank baits, trolling deep-running lures in the old river channel and a few of the fishermen were drifting or still-fishing with live bait. These fishermen were not producing any fish, but in each case the individual fisherman stuck to his particular method all day long.

I happened to be fishing with a local sportswriter, and we began our work by trolling the rocky rip-rap along a causeway (man-made structure) that stretched all the way across the lake. After thoroughly checking the shallows, I discovered a very nice breakline that was occurring at a depth of 15 feet and was running parallel to the causeway. While making a pass on this 15' breakline, we discovered a pronounced turn or change in direction that created a bar-like feature or finger, that broke off into the deeper water.

Recognizing this as an important structure situation, I quickly threw a marker and proceeded by making straight-line trolling passes in an attempt to cover the spot thoroughly. We made several passes without success, but I was convinced through my interpretation of the area that there should be some fish on that bar and if we weren't catching any, then our presentation of lures or our "method" was off. So, we anchored our boat up in the shallow section of the bar (9' feet) and began fan casting in order to work the 15' break at the finger extending into the deeper water. By using a 100 series Spoonplug, we were able to control the depth and speed of our lure. The best procedure was to cast the bait out beyond the break and allow it to sink to the bottom. We then retrieved the lure at a very high rate of speed (after all, it was August), bumping the lure all the way up and over the top of the breakline.

The end result was a limit of good bass between three and four pounds and a bonus walleye of about six pounds. Unlike Santee-Cooper where all the fish were caught while trolling, all the fish at Berlin were caught while casting. I believe that trolling and casting are equally important in the overall picture of successful fishing and that there is definitely a time and place for both. The important thing to remember is, regardless whether we are trolling or casting, we must always strive to secure the proper depth and speed control for that particular time and place.

We should also remember that the next time we locate fish from a casting position at Berlin Reservoir or anywhere else, we may find that a slow, jump-type lure such as a jig, plastic worm, jigging spoon, etc., may produce the fish while the fast, bottom-bumping Spoonplug might draw a blank. In every fishing situation, lure speed must be thoroughly checked until the proper and best speed can be determined.



Let me carry this theme a bit further by telling you about a trip where casting and trolling were equally important. As part of my recent television show with Curt Gowdy, I was sent to Pennsylvania to fish for smallmouth bass on Lake Erie. Quite obviously, there's a lot of water out there, so my initial problem was trying to locate the fish. I have often said that most all water has no fish most of the time. Fishing big waters (such as one of the Great Lakes) will really teach you the full meaning of that statement. Again, I began my fishing by trolling simply because this is the quickest way of eliminating unproductive water and arriving at the fish. After checking three shallower breaklines I discovered a deep but subtle break occurring at a depth of 47 feet. In order to reach these deeper break-lines, it's necessary to use wire line and larger lures. So when fishing for smallmouth bass or any specie that has a small mouth, (white bass, stripers, hybrid stripers) I will regularly attach a small trailer bait. Armed with wire line, an 800Spoonplug, and a small jig trailer, I began to troll the 47 foot drop-off. I hadn't gone more than a few yards when I hit my first fish a whopping 5 pound smallmouth!

Because of the depth of water I was fishing and the size of that fish, I determined that he probably wasn't alone. At that point, the proper procedure would be to stop and thoroughly cast the area where the fish was caught. But, due to the general slope of the lake bottom and the fact that I was 3 miles from shore, there was no way that I could achieve a "normal" casting position (anchor shallow, throw deep). My boat was in 47 feet and I was trying to cast a spot in 47 feet so my only choice was to vertical jig. I got on my trolling motor so I could hold the boat in the same area and simply drop a jigging spoon straight down underneath the boat. Once the lure hit the bottom, I jumped it one time and immediately

had a fish. Continuing with this procedure, each time the lure hit the bottom I had another fish. I caught 18 smallmouth bass on 18 drops before it petered out. Once the action stopped, I went back to the troll and continued along the breakline. I went another 150 yards and caught another fish on the troll. Again, I repeated the original procedure by getting on the trolling motor and going to the vertical jig.

As in the first case, I immediately started catching fish and caught another group of 15 or 20 bass. Once the action stopped I simply went back to the troll and located another group of fish and this is how it went all day long. I caught more than 150 smallmouth, including a real giant at 6 and 3/4 pounds. Now, by any standard this was a great day! If you analyze the procedures that I used, I found my fish by trolling and caught most of the fish by casting.

Let me give you one more good example of a day when the accepted method just wasn't getting' it. It was late August and I was fishing Canesus Lake just south of Rochester, NY. Canesus is a natural, glacier lake and has a weedline that breaks off at a depth of 15 feet. Most of the fishermen I encountered on Canesus were still-fishing with live bait or using what I consider to be one of the most over-rated methods of fishing ever devised "back trolling with Lindy-rigs".

The time of the year was late August and as I launched my boat I wasn't surprised to find that the water was extremely warm. In fact, it felt like bath water. Understanding that a fish is a cold-blooded creature and that his metabolism speeds up as the water warms; I knew immediately that my speed control would be fast. The exact opposite of the speed control created by back-trolling!



Since I could not find a contour map of Canesus and had no prior knowledge of the lake, my experience told me that the quickest way to locate structure (and at the same time catch a fish) would be by trolling the outside edge of the weedline. So I jumped that weedline and began to troll at the base or bottom of the outermost edge at a depth of 15 feet. I was using a 100 Spoonplug and remembering the importance of speed control, I cranked that outboard until I reached the approximate boat speed of some 10-12 mph. I hadn't gone a hundred yards and was well within sight of the boat ramp when I hit my first fish, a 12 pound northern pike. That fish was so active that he literally jumped and cleared the water four separate times! (Most of the times, northern don't jump.) So at that moment I knew I was in business.

During the next two days I caught over a hundred northern pike, almost as many bass, and about 25 walleye (two over eight pounds)! I was able to locate many productive structures on Canesus Lake and I caught my fish both casting and trolling. In each case, my lure speed was extremely fast. It seemed that the faster I went, the better the fish liked it.

It was obvious to me that the main reason most of the local fishermen were having trouble was because they were giving no thought to speed control. Their slow-moving presentation of drifting and back-trolling was not the answer at Canesus Lake in August. Now how about the speed control when the waters get cold? Who can say? We'll just have to wait and see.

There is another area where the "accepted method" idea is extremely evident in the classification of fishermen. Time and time again I hear anglers say, I'm a bass fisherman, I'm a musky fisherman, I'm a trout fisherman, I'm a walleye fisherman, etc. Each of these classifications comes with its own set of "accepted methods".

To me, this type of thinking is absolutely ridiculous! You must understand that a bass is a fish, a musky is a fish, a walleye is a fish, a striper is a fish, and so on and so forth. They all live in water, utilize structure and are affected by weather and water conditions in the same way! Therefore, if you want to consistently catch any or all of these different species of fish, your approach should always be the same and that is to rely on your knowledge of a fish and, not on one particular "method".

You know down through the years, I've had to learn (as you will) many hard lessons. There will always be numerous problems involved with the many different fishing situations that we encounter. The solution to a problem might rely on your ability to interpret weather or water conditions, interpretation of structure, or in the proper presentation of lures.

Regardless of the particular problems of the day, your answer will not be found in the accepted method, but will be found in our total knowledge of fishing facts and our ability to apply these facts on the water. In fact, catching fish can be broken down to a very simple two-phase approach. **First**, we must have the ability to locate fish. This can be done by understanding the true facts about a fish:

- What are his habits?
- What are his instincts?
- How is he affected by weather and water conditions?
- Where is he most likely to be found in a lake from both a daily and seasonal standpoint?

These are just a few of the things that must be understood. Once the fish are located, then **second** we must develop the mechanical skills and ability to physically catch them. In general terms, you must be able to both troll and cast. In more specific terms, you need to know how to fish a top water bait, a weedless bait, a crankbait, the jump-type lures like jigs, plastic worms, jigging' spoons, and so forth. In addition, you must develop a working knowledge of some specialty presentations such as flipping and pitching, river-rigging and trolling with wire, just to name a few.

Here's the bottom line. Your knowledge of a fish and the water he swims in will enable you to interpret each and every fishing situation and allow you to determine exactly what is needed to catch him. By developing the techniques and methods of presentation that I mentioned earlier, you will have the confidence and the versatility to consistently catch fish regardless of where you're fishing or the specie of fish you are after.

Now, I realize that all of this sounds quite involved but it's not necessary to have a college degree to understand these facts. In truth, if you're serious about improving your ability, the fishing knowledge and the mechanical skills I've been talking about are easily attainable.

Final Words - As many of you already know, I studied under the legendary Buck Perry for many years. It was Buck who taught me everything I know about fishing, and in the early years of my apprenticeship, he shared with me his basic guideline for fishing success that I would like to share with you. This guideline is the cornerstone of all modern-day fishing and always will be the foundation for all of our future studies.

- "The home of the fish, where he spends the greater part of his time, is somewhere in the deep or deepest water in the area being fished. This deep-water home is referred to as the sanctuary zone because it is the only sanctuary that a fish has from a changing or hostile environment.
- When in the sanctuary depths, the fish are normally so dormant and so deep that they are almost impossible to locate and catch. But as fishermen we are saved due to the fact that the fish don't stay there all the time.
- Once or twice on an average fishing day they will become active and they may move toward the shallower water. We are saved again due to the fact that when these fish become active and move, they do not just go in any direction. The route they take has bottom features which are referred to as structure, breaks, and breaklines. These are the features that lead them on their way.
- As fish move along these structures they will eventually pause or stop on a break or breakline on or connected to that structure.
- How far they go along these migration routes and how long they stay will be completely dependent upon and controlled by the weather and water conditions that exist at that particular time.
- If you and I desire to consistently catch fish whenever or wherever we may go fishing, we must control the depth and speed of our lures on and/or around the bottom features (structure, breaks and breaklines) that the fish are using in their movements and migrations."

Well, I guess I've given you enough to think about for this month, but in closing let me remind you, Don't become a one "method" fisher- man!

Warmest Regards and good fishing!



Don Dickson